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Department of State/18

TELEGRAM

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AG-047

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 SY-05 MCT-02 PH-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7693
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
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SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7693

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGDV PINT SHUM AR
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: GUARDED OPTIMISM

SUMMARY. WE BELIEVE THAT CERTAIN ATTITUDINAL CHANGES ARE OBSERVABLE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA WHICH GIVE US HOPE FOR BASIC REVISIONS IN THE SYSTEM OF REPRESSION. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ALL HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS HAVE CEASED IN ARGENTINA OR ARE ABOUT TO CEASE, EVEN THOUGH AS REPORTED EARLIER THE NUMBER OF ABUSES IS DOWN. END SUMMARY.

1. WE ARE AT A MOMENT WHEN GUARDED OPTIMISM ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ARGENTINA SEEMS WARRANTED. THERE IS A LONG HAUL AHEAD. MACHINERY FOR REPRESSION--IN TERMS OF ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE THREE SERVICES AND THE POLICE--REMAINS TO BE "DE-MOBBED" OR, MORE LIKELY, RE-TOOLED IN ORDER TO CONTROL VIOLENCE FROM BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT. CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS MUST COME ABOUT WHICH WILL ENABLE ARGENTINE OFFICIALS--FROM CORPS COMMANDER DOWN TO RANK AND FILE MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES--TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN TERRORISM, OR LATENT CAPACITY FOR MAKING TERROR, FROM LEFTIST OR ECCENTRIC POLITICAL BELIEF. WHAT ENCOURAGES US RECENTLY IS EVIDENCE THAT ATTITUDINAL CHANGES ARE TAKING PLACE WHICH--ALTHOUGH THEY MAY PROVE EPHEMERAL--REPRESENT THE FIRST INDISPENSABLE STEP TOWARD CLEANING UP A PERSISTENT PATTERN OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

2. TO A LARGE EXTENT IT IS ARMY COMMANDER VIOLA WHO HAS EMERGED TO LEAD THOSE WHO HAVE RECOGNIZED A NEED FOR DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT. IN A SPEECH ON SEPTEMBER 26 HE SPOKE POINTEDLY OF THE NEED TO "WIN THE PEACE," AND TO GET A HANDLE ON SUBVERSION'S AFTERMATH. HE HAS ACTED TOO UPON HIS BELIEF THAT CHANGE IS NECESSARY. BUENOS AIRES 7626 REPORTED GUIDELINES RECENTLY GIVEN BY THE ARMY TO CORPS COMMANDERS AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES REGARDING WAYS OF HANDLING TERRORISM AND SUBVERSION.

TO THE EFFECT THAT THE FIRST CORPS COMMANDER HAS TAKEN STEPS TO CONTROL THE ACTIVITY OF SECURITY UNITS--WORKING WITHIN THE FIRST CORPS ZONE OF GEOGRAPHICAL COMMAND. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD IN GREAT CONFIDENCE THAT A SECURITY SERVICE THAT REPORTS TO VIOLA HAS BEEN GIVEN THE TASK STUDYING THE SHAPE OF AND THE REASONS UNDERLYING THE US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. THERE HAVE BEEN NEW INCIDENTS REPORTED IN THE PRESS OF ARMY UNITS' ARRESTING PROVINCIAL POLICE FOR ABUSE, AND A REPORT APPEARED OF THE SENTENCING OF AN ARMY CORPORAL FOR THE MURDER OF A PRESUMED TERRORIST. THIS NEEDS MORE STUDY, BUT WE THINK THESE EVENTS MAY TURN OUT TO EVIDENCE

THE ATTITUDINAL CHANGES THAT HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY PERCEPTIBLE.

3. ALTHOUGH IT IS GENERAL VIOLA WHO TODAY APPEARS TO BE TAKING THE INITIATIVE IN BRINGING GREATER CONTROL OVER SECURITY OPERATIONS, WE NEED NOT CONCLUDE THAT THESE EFFORTS BEGIN AND END WITH HIM. ALTHOUGH HIS EFFORTS WILL ENGENDER OPPOSITION AMONG OPERATING LEVELS OF THE SECURITY FORCES, THERE IS WIDESPREAD UNDERSTANDING WITHIN THE MILITARY OF THE NEED OF GETTING STRICT, HIERARCHICAL CONTROL OVER ALL PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN SECURITY OPERATIONS. DAO HAS REPORTED EARLIER WAYS IN WHICH SECURITY PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONS WERE CUT BACK, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE SERVICES' INTRODUCING AGAIN COURSES AND SCHOOLS WHICH HAD BEEN SUSPENDED DUE TO MOBILIZATION AGAINST SUBVERSION. WE REPORTED FOR EXAMPLE THAT THE NAVAL MECHANICS SCHOOL SEEMS NOW TO BE GIVEN OVER

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S2000000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

() Release (X) Excise () Deny

Exemption(s): B1

Declassify: (X) In Part () In Full

(X) Classify as C () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date 4/18/01 Declassify on Reason 25X1

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INCOMING
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SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7693

COMPLETELY TO TRAINING, RATHER THAN HAVING SECTIONS
RESERVED AS HEADQUARTERS AND INTERROGATION AND HOLDING
CENTERS FOR THE ANTI-SUBVERSION CAMPAIGN.

4. WE SEE ALSO A LIBERALIZATION OF THE PRESS, WHICH
WE BELIEVE RESPONDS TO CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE. TWO THEORIES
EXIST FOR THE EMERGENCE OF THE PRESS ONTO THE HUMAN RIGHTS
FIELD. (NOTE: WE ARE TALKING HERE OF THE SPANISH
LANGUAGE PRESS. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE "HERALD" HAS ALL
ALONG TAKEN A FIRM HUMAN RIGHTS STAND.) ACCORDING TO
ONE OF THESE THEORIES: "WORD IS OUT" THAT THIS IS A
SUBJECT WHICH NOW CAN BE TREATED. ANOTHER THEORY IS
THAT THE PRESS IS MERELY DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY--
PRESSING HARD ON A VIVID AND IMMEDIATE ISSUE-- AT A TIME
WHEN, BECAUSE OF THE DIFFUSION OF AUTHORITY WHICH EXISTS
UNDER THE NEW "SCHEME OF POWER", THERE IS SIMPLY A
BETTER CHANCE OF GETTING BY WITH THE RISK. IN ANY EVENT
IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT COVERAGE OF DISAPPEARANCES AND
IMPRISONMENTS HAS SUDDENLY GONE UP SHARPLY. EDITORIAL
COMMENT--NOTABLY IN LA PRENSE-- BUT IN CLARIN AND OTHER
PAPERS AS WELL-- NOW HAS HIED TOWARD TANTATIVE BUT FIRM
CONCLUSIONS ABOUT WHERE ARGENTINA STANDS IN RELATION TO
ITS TERRORIST'S MOVEMENTS OF YESTERDAY AND ITS HUMANE
RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD TOMORROW. THE ASSOCIATION OF
ARGENTINE NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS HAS JUST ISSUED A STERN
DECLARATION ON LACK OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. IN THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH THERE APPEARS INCREASING RESTIVENESS
WITHIN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, AND ONE BISHOP--
ZASPE OF SANTA FE--HAS IN THE PAST FEW DAYS SPOKEN UP
SHARPLY.

5. THESE WIDESPREAD ATTITUDINAL CHANGES AS REFLECTED
IN STATEMENTS BY VIOLA, (AND, ALREADY, APPARENT EFFORTS
ON HIS PART TO START SHAPING UP THE SYSTEM AS WELL)
AND BY THE PRESS AND CHURCH ARE DELICATE SPROUTS. WE
DO NOT INTEND TO SIGNAL TO THE DEPARTMENT THAT HUMAN
RIGHTS VIOLATIONS HERE WILL CEASE. WE HAVE EARLIER
REPORTED THAT VIOLATIONS WERE NUMERICALLY DECREASING
AND REAPPEARANCES ARE UP, EVEN WHILE WE COULD NOT POINT
TO EVIDENCE THAT THE SYSTEM OF REPRESSION--A HARD
FACT OF ARGENTINA'S RECENT HISTORY--HAD BEEN MODIFIED.
WHAT WE WANT TO GIVE NOTICE OF IN THIS REPORT IS A
BEGINNING BELIEF THAT ATTITUDINAL CHANGES ARE TAKING
PLACE WHICH ARE THE FIRST NECESSARY STEP TOWARDS
"SYSTEM" MODIFICATION.
CASTRO

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